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AUTHOR Ray, Amy S.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Research suggests that higher level jobs are more likely to contain the essential job characteristics needed to cue achievement motives in high achievement workers. A comparison of university administrators and maintenance workers confirmed that the higher the level of the occupation, the higher the morale of the worker. However, no significant differences occurred in achievement needs for the two groups. As need for achievement increased, job satisfaction increased for administrators, but decreased for maintenance workers. Satisfaction with supervision was the key factor in overall satisfaction differences. Findings indicate that both situational and personality variables should be considered when studying job satisfaction, and that achievement need is an important mediator of the relationship between job level and job satisfaction. (JAC)

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THE EFFECTS OF NEED FOR ACHIEVEMENT ON THE JOB LEVEL/JOB SATISFACTION RELATIONSHIP

Amy S. Ray

James K. Esser

Lamar University
Beaumont, Texas

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The topic of job satisfaction has long been an area of interest in organizational psychology. Traditionally, interest has focused on the relationship between hierarchical job level and job satisfaction. In a comprehensive review, Porter and Lawler (1965) reported that the vertical level of the job in the organization hierarchy has generally been found to be positively related to job satisfaction. According to MacEachron (1977) this relationship is not surprising since higher level jobs generally offer more authority, social status, prestige, responsibility, task complexity, and pay. More recently, research has focused on whether individual differences variables moderate the job level/job satisfaction relationship (Blood & Hulin, 1967; MacEachron, 1975). The present study was designed to further examine the role of individual differences as moderators of the job level/job satisfaction relationship.

Several studies have demonstrated the positive effect job level has on job satisfaction (Adams, Dennis, and Hulin, 1977; Armstrong, 1971; Stone, Mowday, and Porter, 1977). Hackman and Lawler (1971) maintain that there are five core dimensions which determine the degree of job satisfaction. In addition, these five core dimensions are more likely to be found in higher level jobs. The first dimension, variety, is the degree to which the job requires employees to perform a wide range of tasks. The second dimension, autonomy, is determined by the extent to which employees have a major say in such things as sheduling work, selecting equipment, and deciding on procedures. The third

dimension, task identity, is the ability to identify with the work being done. The fourth dimension, feedback on job performance, allows the worker to know where he stands in relation to other workers. The final dimension is task significance, which is the opportunity to perform a job that effects the well-being of other workers (Brief and Aldag, 1975; Rousseau, 1977). The presence of these five core dimensions in higher level jobs increases the probability of greater job satisfaction. However, the relationship between job level and job satisfaction is not as clear cut as it first appears. According to MacEachron (1977) the potential mediating effects of individual differences should be taken into consideration when studying job satisfaction.

In a study conducted by Blood and Hulin (1967) the authors investigated the potential moderating effects of "alienation from middle class work norms" on the job level/job satisfaction relationship. The results revealed that blue collar workers who accepted middle class norms reported greater job satisfaction in higher level jobs, while alienated workers were more satisfied in lower level jobs. A similar study was conducted by MacEachron (1977) this time field independence was chosen as the moderating variable. Correlational analysis indicated that there did exist a positive relationship between job level and job satisfaction but only for field independent subjects. Again a personality variable moderated the job level/job satisfaction relationship.

The present study was designed to investigate the moderating effects of need for achievement (N Ach) on the job level/job satisfaction relationship. N Ach represents an expressed need to excel or succeed at something important (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, and Lowell, 1953; Steers and Spencer, 1977). Workers high in N Ach are goal-oriented. They seek out challenging jobs that are not too difficult, prefer to assume personal responsibility for work, and prefer situations where they receive feedback on task performance (Andrews, 1967; Atkins, 1958; Johnson and Stinson, 1975; McClelland, 1966). Workers low in N Ach prefer situations where responsibility is shared with others, and tasks are not too complex (Steers, 1975a; Steers, 1975b). Research conducted by Hackman and Lawler (1971) suggests that when jobs are challenging, workers with high N Ach demonstrated greater satisfaction than workers low in N Ach. In addition, Johnson and Stinson (1975) suggest that workers high in N Ach are more likely to report dissatisfaction with their jobs when they perceive their task assignments to be ambiguous or if they receive conflicting demands on their jobs. A job must be sufficiently challenging to cue the achievement motive in order for workers high in N Ach to be satisfied (Steers and Braunstein, 1976).

Since higher level jobs are more likely to contain the essential job characteristics needed to cue the achievement motive in higher N Ach workers it was hypothesized that:

1. Administrators would be significantly more satisfied in their jobs than maintenance workers.
2. Job satisfaction would correlate positively with N Ach for administrators, but negatively for maintenance workers.

Method

Subjects

Subjects in the present study were 65 male employees at Lamar University. The sample consisted of 28 university administrators and 37 maintenance workers.

Variable Measurement

Job Satisfaction: Job satisfaction was measured by the use of the Job Description Index (JDI) developed and validated by Smith, Kendall, and Hulin (1969). The JDI consists of adjective checklists on which workers describe five facets of the job by means of a "yes", "?', or "no" response. The five facets are the work itself, pay, promotion, supervision, and co-workers. The higher the score on each dimension, the greater the amount of job satisfaction. The JDI was chosen because of the extensive validation involved in its construction. Each of the five dimensions have been shown to have convergent and discriminant validity (Smith, Kendall, and Huli, 1969).

Need for Achievement: The Manifest Needs Questionnaire (MNQ), developed by Steers and Braunstein (1976a), was selected as the measure of N Ach. Responses are recorded on a 7-point

Likert scale, ranging from "always" to "never". A low score on the N Ach scale of the MNQ actually indicates a high N Ach. The MNQ is a behaviorally based method of measuring strength of the achievement motive, since the items are descriptions of actual work behaviors. According to Murray (1938) behavior is motivated largely by the extent to which various needs are manifested and that need manifestation is best measured through recorded behaviors instead of affective responses. Validation and reliability studies done on the MNQ by Steers and Braunstein (1976b) indicate acceptable test-retest reliability (.72) for the N Ach scale. The MNQ was selected as a measure of N Ach in the present study because of its relevancy to the work situation, its minimal completion time (8 minutes), and because it has exhibited reasonably high levels of reliability and validity Steers and Braunstein, 1976b).

Procedure

Subjects were each given a packet containing the JDI and MNQ. Subjects were then instructed to complete the questionnaires on their own time and return them within a few days. Actual completion time for the two questionnaires was approxiamety one hour. Subjects were assured that their responses would remain confidential.

Results and Discussion

Several statistical tests were performed on the data in order to test the hypotheses. Means and standard deviations for the N Ach and job satisfaction variables are presented in Table 1 for the two job levels. As hypothesized, administrators

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Insert Table 1 about here

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reported significantly greater job satisfaction than did maintenance workers (M=159.75 and 123.62, respectively; $t(63)=5.42$, $p < .001$). This result replicates previous findings and therefore further substantiates the hypothesis that the higher the level of the occupation the higher the morale of the worker. However, there was no significant difference in N Ach between administrators and maintenance workers (M=26.29 and 24.70, respectively; $t(63)=1.50$, $p < .05$). This finding is somewhat surprising since individuals high in N Ach are goal oriented and tend to seek out challenging jobs, while low N Ach people prefer jobs that are not too complex (Steers 1975a; Steers, 1975b). Therefore, individuals high in N Ach should be more inclined to go into administrative type of jobs. The computed pearson correlations between N Ach and overall job satisfaction for administrators ($r=.29$) and maintenance workers ($r=-.17$) differed significantly in the predicted manner ($z=1.79$, $p < .05$, one-tailed). The results

indicated as hypothesized that as N Ach increased job satisfaction in turn increased for administrators but for maintenance workers as N Ach increased job satisfaction decreased. Since the variables of N Ach and job satisfaction interacted in the predicted manner the importance of N Ach as a moderating variable in the job level/ job satisfaction relationship was demonstrated.

To further analyze the data the five componets of the JDI; work itself, supervision, promotion, pay, and co-workers were separately correlated with N Ach. The correlation components are presented in Table 2. The results indicated that satisfaction

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Insert Table 2 about here

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with supervision was the key componenet to the overall satisfaction differences. The computed pearson correlations between N Ach and satisfaction with supervision for administrators ($r=.34$) and maintenance workers ($r=-.05$) differed significantly in the predicted manner ($z=1.55$, p .10, one-tailed). Since individuals high in N Ach prefer recognition and feedback which are supplied by supervisors it is not surprising that satisfaction with supervision accounts for the majority of differences in reported satisfaction between administrators and maintenance workers.

In conclusion, the results support the replication hypothesis that job satisfaction increases with higher level jobs. In addition, the present study lends support for the idea that both situational and personality variables should be considered when

studying job satisfaction. Specifically, N Ach is an important mediator of the relationship between job level and job satisfaction and should be taken into account when predicting worker satisfaction.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of N Ach and Job Satisfaction Scores

Job Level	N Ach		Job Satisfaction	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Maintenance Workers	24.70	5.07	123.62	31.88
Administrators	26.29	3.42	159.75	21.79

Table 2

Correlations between N Ach and Components of the JDI

	Work	Supervision	Promotion	Pay	Co-Workers
Maintenance workers	-.08	-.05	-.16	-.31	-.08
Administrators	.07	.34	.07	.02	.21
	z=.57 NS	z=1.55 p .01 (1-tailed)	z=.86 NS	z=1.28 NS	z=1.19 NS

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